

# Feet First Into Hell A Helljumper Story

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Summary: Feet First Into Hell is a reconstruction of the events that occur during Halo 2 but from the perspective view of the ODST Helljumpers.

## 1. Chapter 1

\*\*Feet First Into Hell\*\*

\*\*A Helljumpers Novel\*\*

\*\*Prologue\*\*

\*\*2257 Hours, October 24, 2552 \*\*

\*\*Aboard High Charity\*\*

The remaining survivors of first platoon left the Master Chief above docking bay 14. They watched with inspired awe as the bulk of the chiefs MJOLNIR armour grew smaller as he descended, down the central grav-lift, into the bowels of the station. For the last 47 minutes we had pursued, from what little Intel received from Cortana, a prophet. We had managed to track him through the dense interior from our holding pens, up until this point. We stood looking out at the perfectly constructed station from our vantage point above. If you couldn't manage to grasp the courage or stomach to peer over the platform in to the abyss below then a helljumpers life was not for you. I'm not afraid of heights but I was scared. It was too freaking scary for my taste. As I was pondering this matter a friendly hand dropped onto my shoulder releasing me from the daze.

> "Everything OK Sarge? Its best we start moving on. Wouldn't want those blasted covies regrouping on us now" <br> The man standing there was private Zone who first saw action against the invasion of earth. He'd been part of the relieving squad in New Mombassa which I had recruited into my platoon after his had taken major casualties.

> "Sure as hell we don't" I replied in the most commanding voice that could be conjured up. After reviewing the command, I was given by the

Master Chief before he stepped onto the lift, I had but one choice. Try to find a transport off this god forsaken piece of alien filth. Having no way in hell to do this, I thought it would be best to rally the men with a speech that would boost their morale and hopefully forget about the tragic lost we had suffered.<br> "Alright you yellow belly excuses for soldiers, listen up." They straightened up to attention even though they were exhausted. That was the difference between a marine and a civilian. A marine would never show tiredness unless the mission was completed.

> "The Master Chief is going to continue hunting the prophet and when he finds him, stick his size 10 boots up its god dam ass. Now ladies, the Chief has given us the pleasurable task of finding a transport off this station. He expects us to fail but will we?" There was silence.<br> "Marines I'd get more noise off a civilian than what I'm hearing now. Shake it off. Will we fail?" I repeated the question looking straight into their eyes.

> "NO SIR!" The reply came as one. I had just managed put their minds off the atrocities we had been through.<br> "Dam right we aren't marines, now lets move it out."

The squad retraced its steps through the now peaceful mausoleum. The blood of the Covenant which stained the walls still flowed from those who had perished just minutes ago. I felt unusually sad that this war zone had corrupted even this room of holy sanctum. We moved on but not before refreshing our ammo supply for the carbines we were using. Around the next bend showed a trio of Grunts, two showing signs of serious laceration to vital limbs.

> "Hold" I muttered under my breath lifting up an arm. Moving closer to inspect the Grunts, my analysis seemed to be correct. One of the grunts had been pulled apart by brute force and was still twitching.<br> "I hate it when that happens" a low reply came from behind as if he new what I was thinking. Normally any spasms would stop within 1 - 2 minutes. This meant that the killer was close and the most probable thing which could have done this was a Brute. Doubtlessly watching over us right this very moment waiting for us to come out of our position into its killing range. I hoped I was wrong but knowing my luck that wasn't to be. I signalled to the squad with a variety of hand movements, and received four thumbs up. Slapping in a fresh cartridge we broke our cover.

We slowly advanced scouring the area with piercing eyes. The bend opened up into a small room, when I say small I mean small be Covenants standards, with access to the walkway to the other towers on the other side. Or so I hoped but with only my memory guiding us we could easily get lost without the once present Cortana watching over. Poking my head around the opening revealed to me that the room was wide enough for a M808B Scorpion tank to stroll through freely. The room its self was purple, no surprise there, had many arches concealing dark places and crevices where some beast could easily be hiding. This was where most of my concentration was at hold. If something was lurking in those shadows then we'd be ready for them. As we began to draw closer to the door it suddenly parted revealing a monstrosity in its wake. A Brute. It stood there puzzled for a brief second not expecting us in front of it but then reached back and unslung its great weapon from its back. The weapon was smothered in blood, Grunts blood, that I was sure belonged to the trio down the corridor. It pointed it straight at me. Any second now, any second before that grenade incinerates us. I was getting ready to meet my end when nothing happened. I dared to look up only to see that the top half of the brutes head was missing. Its face said it all. The

look of confusion just before it had met its end.

"What in hell happened!" I started to say but was interrupted from behind.

> "Sarge, Look!" All around us shapes were de-cloaking showing us that this room was not as empty at it seemed. Before I had even reacted the Elites were issuing orders to us.  
"Humans. Drop your weapons, you will not be harmed. You are to be escorted off this station immediately"

> "Sarge?" I didn't have time to think. They outnumbered us two to one.  
"Drop your weapons marines; we'll live to fight another day"

> We were escorted, not a word I would have used, by the elites to a small docking bay the other side of tower 14. There awaited us 2 Phantoms prepped ready for departure to the surface. The squad was split into two but I was glad that I was issued with Private Zone. He was a good man and I would do my best to protect him. My stomach lurched as we took off but being a helljumper was used to this happening. I know this idea I had was crude but we had finally made it off High charity, still breathing.<p>

## 2. Chapter 2

\*\*Chapter 1\*\*

\*\*0549 Hours, October 20, 2552\*\*

\*\*Aboard Earth defence platform, Cairo.

> (4 Days earlier)<strong>

Tossing and turning on the hard mattress I awoke from nightmare to reality. Perspiration dripped from my forehead onto the bed sheets beneath me. Half dressed and saturated in sweat I rose moving wearily into the bathroom. I had been suffering from the same dream for the past few weeks. Without knowing what these nightmares were or what they meant was another dilemma. I would have to schedule an appointment at the stations infirmary but then again they may say that I was suffering from wartime stress and relieve me from my command. I couldn't let this happen not now anyway. Turning on the tap I filled the sink half full with cold water and dunked my head into the liquid. This cool refreshing chore was enough to awaken me from the aftershock. I stared into the square mirror above the sink looking into the eyes of the man who stood there. He was in his mid 30s, clean shaven with a small scar above his right eye concealed by his eyebrows. His face had an angular quality to it where the skull met the skin along his cheeks. Dark cobalt eyes peered back into mine showing the atrocities of battles which had passed. You would not believe in society today anything that this man had gone through. Never the less I had pursued through each skirmish mostly unscathed apart from a few wounds, none too lethal. Turning back toward the bedroom I put on my command clothes and checked the clock at my bedside. 0551 it flicked before shutting off. I would really need to replace the batteries before long. I made a mental note and picked up my pass for the station. On it was written:

Earth defence platform, Cairo Sergeant Chris "Headshot" Section 4 clearance

This meant I had clearance to everything except for control of this

station which Lord Hood had. With this it would ensure that I could get around safely without much hassle. Before I went for my morning stroll I decided I should go to the stations canteen for some breakfast. On my way there I noticed that the corridors were empty and realised that I was meant to be at a proceeding at 0600 hours. Glancing at my watch and hurrying my pace I had just less than 4 minutes to reach the stations command deck in time.

> I reached the command deck just after it had started. I had missed the giving of honours but another commotion was in the air. There stood Sergeant Johnson (who I should now have called Sergeant-Major), the Master-Chief and Cortana in all their glory.<br>"Slipspace ruptures, directly off our battle cluster"

> "Show me" Replied Lord Hood as calm as ever.<br>"Fifteen Covenant capital ships, holding position just outside the Killzone"

> What the hell. Did I just hear that correctly? Covenant ships had found us. I knew it was just a matter of time before they found us but not so soon. I had a family down on Earths surface and I wasn't about to just about to let the Covenant glass this world. I heard what sounded like Fleet Admiral Harper on the radio.<br>"We are engaging the enim"

> I can't just stand here on this station and do nothing. I would rather be on Earth right now preparing to defend the assault wave. As if someone had listened to me rambling on.<br>"Sir, additional contacts! Boarding craft, and lot's of 'em!"

> I knew what had to be done; I would give my life to defend this station from any threat that would enter. Running towards the weapon stash I managed to grab a Battle Rifle and a small pistol sidearm.<br>"ALERT. Boarders inbound"

> Round the corner I went ducking behind a barricade. Sgt Johnson was there and so was the Master Chief. He was huge. I'd never seen a Spartan this close up. We had all thought that the Spartan project had all been exterminated when Reach was glassed. I don't know whether I was more scared to take on the Chief or a covie Elite. I was glad at least for the time being that we had him on our side.<br>"How's it going, Malta"

> "Stand byâ€|they're latched! Check your targets, watch the crossfire. They're in standard formation, little bastards up front, big ones in back. Good luck, Cairo"<br>"Field of fire on that bulkhead. Soon as that door opensâ€|let 'em have it"

> I looked around the room for the final time. I saw Private "Se7en" issuing orders to another group of marines while nervously reloading his rifle. We were all nervous. I didn't have my body armour on so an accurate hit would either seriously wound me or worse, kill me. You could hear covies banging on the bulkhead. It was just a matter of time before they could open it. I stuck my head down and waited.<p>

### 3. Chapter 3

\*\*Chapter 2\*\*

\*\*0603 Hours, October 20, 2552 \*\*

\*\*Earth Defence Platform, \*\*

\*\*Cairo Under attack from Covenant fleet\*\*

Time was of the essence and we had none of that. I was surprised by how long it had taken for the bulkhead to open with the sophisticated

technology the Covenant used. But anything which slowed those bastards down was fine by me. In these few precious moments we had been able to set up a defensive machine gun, manned by Sgt Johnson. I was crouched behind a small barricade eyes aiming sown the sight. At least now when they came we would be ready for them. We would be ready for them!

"This is not a drill. I repeat this is not a drill" blared over the loudspeakers in a worrying voice. Many of the staff had not seen combat before and didn't know what to expect. Unlike me which had fought in several campaigns against the covenant in the early years of this war. I had been issued out with the rest to hold the presumed unstoppable covenant force ten years ago from basic when no one had any idea of how to defeat it. The covenant fleet seemed undefeated vanquishing everything in its path until the minor setback of CA'te d'Azur in the Sigma Octanus star system. CA'te d'Azur was attacked by Covenant ground forces, and the Chiefs Spartans were deployed to find out why the Covenant was so fascinated in the city. It turns out that the museum of the city held a Forerunner artifact that the Covenant wanted and the Spartans were able to use their planned distraction to raise the city with a Havoc-nuke. That was a triumphant day for the UNSC. Shaking my head I cleared my vision and concentrated on the moment. A small beam of light appeared in the centre of the bulkhead and I knew the Covenant was finally cutting through.

> "Fingers on the triggers marines" I yelled not leaving my eye off the scope. I had to keep the marines focused. The time would make them unaware. If they were unaware then it could cause sloppiness and if they were sloppy then we'd have a lot more blood on our hands than I'd want. The beam of light stopped and disappeared.<p>

"Hold it, hold it" I murmured. There was a brief moment and then it began.

> The bulkhead exploded outwards sending small, tiny fragments of superheated shrapnel in every direction, knocking down a control console in its wrath. In came a swarm of Grunts for the first line of attack. This species resembled to me of a small dog with a childlike attitude. They wore breather masks to suit their methane atmosphere on their home planet or they would suffocate to death. Behind them towered two Elites roughly measuring 8'6" compared to the Grunts 5'. They wore dark blue body armor augmented by full body shielding which recharged when depleted. The physical appearance of both elites was terrifying. Their jaws were quadruple-hinged; they have an upper jaw, and then four mandible-like lips which are lined with sharp teeth. One of them was barking orders to the grunts upfront and both were wielding the traditional weapons of the elites. The plasma rifle. That weapon would leave a mark on what ever it hit being capable of either semi-automatic or automatic fire.<br> "Let 'em have it marines" I hollered pouring on the fire from my battle rifle. The heavy machine gun opened up ripping apart the breather masks on the grunts and dissecting their puny body armor from them. The Elites stepped up to take aim and heavy caliber rounds sliced through the air straight at them. Normally the Elites shields would deflect minor rounds but they didn't stand a chance with what was about to hit them. The shields failed in a matter of milliseconds leaving the bullets cut into the Elites torso shredding its insides. It was not a pretty sight but it was either us or them. Then a marine next to me got hit from above and was screaming in agony. I didn't know his name and probably wouldn't some other time but looking at that wound knowing that there was nothing no one could do to save him was agonizing. I turned my attention to the attacker and squeezed a shot

in its direction making it duck for cover. As it did so there was an explosion from behind it where my rounds had hit an electrical terminal and the Elite was fried as the mains supply connected to his body armor. It was not a pretty sight believe me. Turning my head I saw private "Se7en" ducking beside a support pillar attempting to reload his SMG and on the balcony just above him stood an Elite in blood red armour. The Elite had just noticed and was raising its Covenant Carbine rifle directly at him.

"Se7en, above you" I screamed. Lifting my rifle which I had just realised was reading empty as the Elite aimed for the kill. It all happened so fast. From out of nowhere the Master Chief appeared spearing the Elite Veteran off the balcony and through the control consoles screen. There was a sickening bloody crunch as the veteran hit the floor smothered in flying glass. The Chief stepped off the dead Elite as the room fell silent. He turned and nodded to Se7en as if asking if he was Ok. The floor was plastered in blue and purple blood and the dead bodies of the invaders. I moved from my barricade toward the remains of the bulkhead and saw a Grunt whizzing about on the floor. In the back of my mind I laughed as I shot it dead.

Elsewhere on the station I could hear gunshots and as if the chief could read my mind he said "that's where we're heading next"

> We progressed slowly through the station towards the hangar bay passing through Habitat Alpha. There we had little trouble of breaking down any Covenant resistance with the Master Chief at our side. It would have seemed that we were winning this fight until we got to the hangar bay 17 minutes later. Covenant presence had been increased here as they tried to enter the station from portside. This hangar bay was big enough to fit two pelican drop ships side to side and with not much cover available was going to get pretty hot when the fighting started. I collected 4 grenades from a stash as we entered and restocked my ammo for the battle rifle. Marines were all ready fighting the covenant on each level of the bay but without help soon the Covenants reinforcements would eventually cut them down. They were relieved when we showed up. I had about 4 marines left in my platoon but I believed it was enough to drive them back. With the help of the Chief the fighting only lasted about 5 minutes. We used fragmentation grenades to clear out the bulk of the force and just fired upon them from our vantage point above. Once the room was clear I climbed down the stairs to view the bay windows. There was a space battle going on all around the cluster. Fleet Admiral Harper and his men were doing their best to keep the Covenant drop ships away. Two Longsword fighters flew passed chasing a group of Seraph bombers past the station. It was a real dogfight out there. Many of the covenant ships were leaving Defence Platform Malta.<p>

"Hey, check it out! The Malta's already driven off its boarders." I turned to face who I believed was Private "Anti".

> "Malta, what's your status?" asked Cortana over the radio, serious as always.<br> "I don't believe it! They're retreating, we won!" came the reply from Malta's defence coordinator. They were the last words he ever spoke. I dared to watch as an explosion which trembled through the heavens erupted and blew the station apart. I had to hold on to embrace the shockwave that engulfed us.

> "This is bad, real bad!" replied Anti in a worrying voice. I had to get us moving again and quickly before more Covies showed up.<br> "Chief, I'm going to take the rest of this platoon and clear out any Covenant bogies on the higher levels so that the Commanders can get to their ships. Good luck" I saluted him and gathered the marines.

> "Come on marines, let's move it out" <br> I lead the marines up towards the portside of the Cairo treading carefully so that we didn't walk into any ambushes. Only once did we encounter any covenant, a pair of Grunts which seemed to have gotten lost from their squad. We quietly eliminated them as they would only be a threat in large numbers but on their own they were cowards. Another shockwave hit the station and I wondered what it was but decided to ask questions later. Ten minutes passed and we finally made our way to the gangway where the Amber Clad was docked. I heard gunfire ahead and signalled to the squad. We moved along the corridor preparing for anything and came out next to the tram entrance. Sgt Johnson and Commander Miranda Keyes were under fire from Covenant further along the gangway. When he saw us he signalled.

> "Glad you've shown up marines. The Covenant are suppressing us down and we need to get the Cmdr to her ship." The door opened next to us and the Chief walked out covered in blue blood. <br> "Come on, Chief, this way!" We fought hard for the next few minutes and the Covenant would not give us a step. Finally after a thorough clean out with a few grenades it was over.

> "Thanks, Chief, I owe you one." Miranda said before entering the Amber Clad. Sgt Johnson shook the Chief's hand and said "Get going. I'll cover the commander" I discussed with the Sgt if my squad and I could hitch a ride down to Earths surface on the Amber Clad. <br> "Sure" He replied smiling his perfect set of white teeth. "As if we've got anything better to do"

#### 4. Chapter 4

\*\*Chapter 3\*\*

\*\*0713 Hours, October 20, 2552 \*\*

\*\*Aboard Transport Pelican 2 \*\*

\*\*Entering New Mombassa Airspace\*\*

"Immediate! Grid kilo 2-3 is hot, recommend mission aboard over"  
> "Roger recon. It's your call Sarge" <br> I got up and moved towards the cockpit window. This Pelican was just one of three which had been sent to assault the cruiser. The men I had chosen for this task were Se7en, Anti, Ekelon and Voodoo. It was a tough choice. I had had to leave good men behind on the Cairo to defend the Mac gun but I knew we'd meet again on the ground. Since we had left our "Guests" on the station, I was out of uniform and suited up in the traditional Helljumper body armor. The suit was a black as the night, including the helmet which was copied from the Spartan MJOLNIR helm except for the ridges which sprouted from the forehead. I had chosen Private Voodoo for his keen eye and millimetre accuracy with the sniper rifle. I had once seen him take out a banshee in mid flight by sniping the elite inside through the hole in the side of the cockpit, only ever accomplished by Spartan 058. Private Ekelon was a new recruit which had shown a tremendous amount of promise. I walked over to him and spoke quietly.

> "You alright son?" "Umm, yes sir" He replied nervously. <br> "You'll do well. I'll keep you're back covered as long as you keep mine intact"

> It wasn't really fair dropping him into the belly of the beast, but was war really fair? I moved back towards the cockpit. <br> "We're going in, get tactical marines!" The voice of Sergeant Johnson

beckoned over the vox as the pelican dropped into the streets of New Mombassa. Here goes nothing I thought.

> "You heard the man, boys. Time for some hazard pay" <br> As if in cue, Se7en released the safety catch on his battle rifle while Anti smacked Ekelon on his shoulder as in a friendly gesture. We were all friends here. We had learnt long ago to put aside our differences and fight to protect our dearest prize of all, Earth.

> "30 seconds out, stand by toâ€œWhoa" <br> "Sir, you might want to take a look at this." The first pilot called me over.

> "God almighty" I murmured. "Do what you can to get me and my boys there in one piece." <p>

500 yards further down the road stood a hulking Covenant battle mech which was classified as the "Scarab". This ground based attack vehicle walks around on six massive legs instead of using anti-gravity pods. It uses two turrets which shoot large shards of explosive crystals for anti-air defence. The scarab's main weapon is a massive, forward firing plasma cannon which are found on Covenant cruisers. The scarab was a deadly and formidable foe, one of the dangerous in the Covenants inventory and I for one was not glad that it was walking the streets of New Mombassa.

Corporal Mere was held steady in the bay of Pelican 3, one hand grasping a hand rail, the other clutching his trusty SMG. He was nervous but he would lead his men into battle none the less. In the background he could vaguely hear the distressed call of the pilot. Flying was never his preferred state of transport but since joining the marines he had learned to cope with it. The scarab had paused and was preparing to fire its main weapon. The cannon was emitting a green luminous light and in three seconds would build up enough energy to propel the superheated plasma over 750m.

> "Evade! Evade now!" shouted the pilot. Time was up. The blast hit the pelican head on raising temperatures inside by well over 2500 degrees. The cockpit held for 910 of a second, just long enough for Mere to let out a cursing scream before the plasma consumed him and his squad.

"We're being targeted"

> "Shake em off us" <br> "I'm trying to"

> The Pelican lurched forward into a dive and then swung to the right. Gigantic crystalline shards erupted from the first turret glancing off the Pelicans heavy armour. Suddenly it plummeted, klaxon alarms blaring in the cockpit. <br> "Engine one has been hit, I've lost lateral control. I can't hold her much longer"

> "Marines, brace for impact" <br> Squad 2 was contained in an uncontrollable Pelican soaring through the sky towards the sandy shores of New Mombassa as the sun rose for a new day.

For the Elite named Isca 'Aehadee, it was just another day in the war to eradicate the humans. He had had orders from above to scout the city and had met little resistance whilst doing so. He was equipped with his cobalt blue ceremonial armor which he had spilled hundreds of his enemy's blood to achieve. He had in his command two Unggoy and a marksman Kig-Yar with a beam rifle. The Elite was surprised that the Grunts had lasted the skirmishes so far. The usual life expectancy of a Grunt when the battle started was just a matter of minutes. They are cowards and simple minded which is why they are usually used as cannon fodder. In the distance a battle raged on between the invasion force and the human's resistance. Eventually this world would fall like everyone before it. Suddenly a beckoning

Whoosh echoed through the air. Isca 'Aehadee looked up in time to see the damaged Pelican of squad 2, flying past overhead, descending rapidly. Bits of falling debris landing on the streets below. The Elite ordered something to his squad and picked up his plasma rifle. Looks like today would be interesting after all.

## 5. Chapter 5

\*\*Chapter 4\*\*

\*\*0727 Hours, October 20, 2552 \*\*

\*\*New Mombassa, \*\*\*\*Africa\*\*

Blackness filled my mind as my eyes opened. The throbbing would not stop. It felt like a volcano had erupted in my head. The pain was intense but it at least meant that I was alive. A trickle of blood ran down my forehead as I lay there momentarily paralysed. All I could remember was the screaming of the engines as the pelican hit the ground. I was thrown forwards on impact and knocked unconscious. Lifting my arm up I reached for the handrail or a crevice where I could pull myself up. I found what was left of the cracked handrail and struggled onto my feet. A surge of pain flew up my left leg and I grasped the rail harder. I hoped it wasn't broken but being able to stand was a good sign. Hearing a muffled cough from behind me I shouted.

> "Status"<br> "Sir, Ekelons down!" the answer came.

> "We've lost our pilots too" another reply from inside the cockpit. Damn. The mission had only just begun and we had already lost three valuable men and over a third of our squad.<br> "Grab there tags and ammo" was the only thing I could think of. At least then if we survived this invasion they could be buried with the 978 billion others which had thought and died in this cascading war. I carefully stepped outside the half buried pelican onto the sandy shores of Mombassa's outskirts. Across the river lay the city of New Mombassa. The gigantic metropolis stood out bright against the rising sun and from this view looked mostly intact. Looks like the fighting had only just started there and that was our destination. Compared to where the Covenant cruiser had landed, we were on the wrong side of town. Next to the transport Private Se7en was standing there, shaken but all in one piece.

> "Sarge? We better get moving" Even after his near death experience on the Cairo and survival of the crash he still held his battle rifle up high and was ready to take on the covenant once more.<br> "Agreed, we'll find better cover in those buildings. Anti you take point."

Isca' Aehadee stared out over the shores of New Mombassa. As the sun rose, rays of light penetrated the water as it glistened. The sand sparkled as the waves broke against the shingle. He was impressed. A sight like this he had not seen since landing on the sacred ring. Still it compared to nothing on his home world, Siltharius. Pity, should it have to burn though. The crash had led him through a building called "Hotel Zanzibar". He was not sure what the word "hotel" meant so he accessed the covenant databank for human civilisations. The pad blinked twice revealing a vague description. After reading it he laughed and thought well, no surprises here then. The elite shook his head. Over a wall he could see thick smoke rising from further down the beach where the human's aircraft fell. But to

reach it his squad would have to traverse across open ground. With no cover they would be cut down if any humans survived. No, he would wait. If there were any survivors they would surely head for cover. Quickly Isca Aehadee decided that this would be a perfect place for an ambush. Ordering the jackal to locate to the third floor of a building that overlooked the beach, he sat and waited. Soon the humans would come this way and fall for his trap. He thought to himself and with a satisfying grin said "Let the hunt begin."

The helljumpers, in standard formation moved across the beach to rest behind a fallen concrete barrier. I crouched. My head was aching from the crash and for a brief second again the pain became unbearable. Signalling to Se7en he stuck his head around the corner surveying the scene. Large chunks of rubble lay sprawled on the floor which had once belonged to hotel Zanzibar. Suddenly a thin purple beam flew past his head and pierced the sand not far away. Se7en must have known where that shot had come from as he told Voodoo.

> "Sniper, third floor-left." Laughing slightly, he strode from cover, raised his sniper rifle, aimed and sniggered.<br> "Here, let me give him my welcome to Earth gift basket." Voodoo gently squeezed the trigger sending a single SRS99C-S2 AM round into the building. A second later the jackal tumbled off the third floor hitting the ground like a rag doll. I smiled at Voodoo and patted him on the back.

> "Nice shot now let's move out marines but keep it tight."<p>

The elite was furious. The jackal's impatience had cost them the element of surprise. After seeing its corpse fall from the sky, the two grunts had decided to abandon there post and flee for there lives.

> "Cowards!" shouted Isca' Aehadee as he grabbed the nearest one at the neck. The grunt squealed and attempted to break free. The elite grasped harder suffocating the creature until it showed no signs of life. Then he tossed it aside as if it were nothing. Activating his camouflage he walked towards the crash site, smoke still bellowing from the pelican. It was time that he dealt with these pests himself.<p>

Private Se7en followed by Anti, me and Voodoo led the squad in a diamond formation through the ruins of Hotel Zanzibar. Weaving in and out of the concrete chunks we moved further into the collapsed structure. I didn't like it. This was a perfect place for an ambush but so far it looked clear. Five meters in front of Se7en stepped out the elite. Its active camo distorting the rubble behind as the light reflected off its armour. Before I had even noticed the elite had brandished his mighty plasma sword and with one swift movement lunged straight at the marine. Either he was just plain lucky or the elite had misjudged the distance we will never know but the sword sliced through the air cutting cleanly through the battle rifle missing the helljumpers armour by a hairs breath.

> "Whoa!" Se7en yelled as he fell backwards more surprised than anything. The battle rifle landed just feet away neatly in two pieces were it sparked furiously. Quickly looking around for something he could use as a weapon he saw and equipped a discarded plasma pistol. He charged it quickly but the elite had vanished.<br> "Dam, where is he? Anybody see him"

> The next thing happened so fast. From above a plasma grenade, this could only be described as a blue flare, dropped out of the sky and latched onto Voodoos helmet. Panicking but thinking quickly the helljumpers unfastened his helmet, chucking it back to its owner. The

grenade exploded in mid flight and caught half of the hiding elite disabling the camo as it roared and pounced.<p>

Isca' Aehadee knew he was outnumbered and without his camouflage he would be struck down in seconds. Knowing this he executed the first thing that came into his head. Pouncing at the first marine he held him captive and drew the sword close to its neck. The elite snarled at the marines as they raised their weapons. He was surrounded. Thinkâ€¢|think. He tried to remember basic training, what he should do in this situation. What he didn't realise is the helljumper flanking his left was holding a charged plasma pistol. The marine in his arm squirmed "Take him guys". The elite snarled again.

> "Cook the bastard" was the last words he heard before the world faded. The great journey had begun for him at last.<p>

"Cook the bastard" I told Se7en, lifting my rifle. He discharged the super hot ball of plasma from his pistol and it swayed through the air at the elite. The plasma hit it head on dissipating its shield. Squeezing the trigger I fired three rounds into its head as it slumped to the ground releasing Anti from the grasp. Anti kneeled gasping for air and splattered with purple blood. I reached my arm out for him and he took it. Then the vox unit spurred to life.

> "Second squad this is Cortana. What is your status over"<br> I looked around at the remains of my war torn squad. Voodoo kicked out at the dead elite more with anger than anything while Se7en helped brace Anti as he stood. I turned back to look at the wreckage of our pelican. Smoke was starting to fade away from the damage bird as the engine fire diminished. I turned my attention back to the vox.

> "Were operation m'am, barely. Our pilots didn't make it"<br> In just after a second the reply came.

> "Find a hole. Stay put. Well come to you."<p>

## 6. Chapter 6

\*\*Chapter 5\*\*

\*\*0752 Hours, October 20, 2552 \*\*

\*\*Hotel Zanzibar, New Mombassa \*\*\*\*(25 minutes later)\*\*

The desk crashed against the floor as my boot struck it. Around me the rest of second squad was constructing defences out of anything available. Chairs, tables, no matter. They would provide limited cover. We were held out in the reception lobby of the hotel which overlooked the interconnecting streets of new Mombassa suburbs. To think that not hours ago that these streets were full of hustling and bustling citizens all now deserted from the area. The lobby was not exactly a big room but felt spacious due to the cream coloured walls and draping mirrors that were laid about. To my left a computer terminal blinked on and off, a scorch mark travelling straight through its centre. I walked over attaching my visor to the screen. Good a video log incomplete I thought. Maybe it would show what happened here. Curiously I selected it to play. On the screen an image of a man appeared. He was gaunt looking with a tidy grade four hair cut and two gazing brown eyes. Looking the job of the hotel manager he spoke into the screen.

"Video diary log â€" October 20th 2552. I started work as usual today. So far only 6 people have checked in this morning, one being a

Mr Richard Johns which I can vaguely remember staying here sometime last year. From the look of things the UNSC has been increasing patrols in the area over the past few days. It's as if something big is about to happen. You can see the fear in people faces as you walk past them in the street as more leave the outskirts. It is not good for business. I sent Debbie out this morning to collect the mail and she still hasn't returned. She has been gone forty-seven minutes and I hope nothing is wrong. Anyway, one of our guests has asked for fresh towels so I'll have a word with her when she returns.

> End video diaryâ€| Wait! What's going on outside? Why are people getting out of their cars? What are they all looking at?" Within the next second a gigantic explosion ripped through the square. As the manager moves away from the console the camera switches to its external view. In the background the manager is shouting frantically.<br> "Oh my god! The building opposite has just exploded showering rubble onto the people below. People are running, screaming everywhere. Mass panic has erupted in the square"

> The camera shows people running for their lives, trampling over each other and the dead from the blast. Behind them two phantom drop ships landed spilling out hordes of covenant troops from their bowels. Without hesitation the covenant opened fire on the civilians. Men, women, children, It didn't matter. It never did. The covenant was here to eradicate the entire human race down to the last child. Poor bastards I thought as I watched the streaming video camera. The camera moved back inside to the monitor showing the complete horror on the manager's face. Suddenly he turned to run and tripped over the chair. Clutching his arm he pushed himself backwards along the floor into the cupboard behind. Next thing an elite walked into view raising its plasma rifle. The manager screamed "Please, no, no, noooo!" I turned away as the elite fired, the plasma weapon tearing through flesh and bone. It laughed manically and turned to face the screen. His rifle began to glow as the monitor blackened. The word 'Error' flickered onto the screen. I unattached my visor and looked behind me into the cupboard. The sprawled out body of the manager was still slumped in the corner, his blood stained the floor. The plasma has punctured his left lung, incinerating his heart. At least his death was a quick one. I made a promise to myself and the manager that if I ever came across that elite. I would care to make his death as long and painful as the harsh winter nights of Meathan

VII.<p>

Anti and Se7en had just finished fortifying our barricades as I walked over to them. Voodoo had climbed a flight of stairs to act as our spotter for the time being.

> "Good job men. I'd like to see those blasted aliens get through this"<br> "Maybe you'll get your chance." The reply was dead serious.

> "We got two elites and a pack of dogs incoming on your 10"<br> "Roger that Voodoo. You can come down off the roof now"  
> "Negative Sarge, going to see if I can take one of those calamari out"<br> "Affirmative, Headshot out"  
> I turned to face the others. They too had heard the radio conversation. I unslung the battle rifle from my back. It was time to earn our pay.<p>

Voodoo moved cautiously out of room B2s window onto the roof of Hotel Zanzibar. The room over looked the whole of the square giving an excellent vantage point. He moved over to the massive metal 'O' and rested his SRS99C-S2 AM rifle on the mid section. Voodoo checked his breathing and blanked out the rest of the world. The two elites moved

closer and closer down the road to hotel Zanzibar. One raised its hand as the squad drew to a halt. The left elite started sniffing the air and turned to face the roof. It must have seen a glint of light sparkle off the gun and pointing to Voodoo and let out a commanding war cry.

> "Bastard" Voodoo thought and opened fire. One round hit the elite in the shoulder blade as it dived for cover. The other covenant ran for the Hotel only to meet responding marine fire from inside. Voodoo clutching his rifle moved across the roof to relocate. The elite he hit was still alive. He knew them all to well.<p>

"Keep the fire on them boys" I shouted out as parts of the barricade melted under sustained plasma fire. I fired three round bursts into the air from behind my war torn table. I poked my head around the corner as a wave of plasma flew in my direction.

> "Sarge I can't get a shot off. They've got a plasma turret on our position"<br> "Hold on marines. Voodoo can you hear me?" The vox fizzled with static. I couldn't make out what he was saying.

> "Rein..ents inâ€|ming"<br> "Say again, Voodoo. Repeatâ€|arg damit"

> The plasma fire halted in our direction and turned to face the new threat. I equipped 2 fragmentation grenades attaching them together with my boot lace. An old trick I had learnt off a previous deceased friend. I pulled the pin out and yelled "Frag and clear". Tossing the grenade bomb through the lobby window into a bunch of grunts I watched the explosion. The effect was devastating. Not only did it destroy the turret, the blast caught the petrol tank of a nearby car flipping it into a near by building.<br> "That's the way, yeah." Se7en called out as he poured on the fire. The elite that was previously on the gun turret was confused. Caught in the crossfire of the defending marines and squad one it issued the command to retreat. As it turned to retreat it ran face first into the butt of the Master Chiefs rifle. The elite's skull cracked under the blow as it fell to the ground dead.

I walked out from behind my cover to meet the Spartan. As I did so the injured elite leaped out from his hiding place with his sword brandished. It growled as blood dripped freely from its wound. The elite raised its blade and paused. A shot crackled through the air as the round hit. Voodoo stood on the roof to the left of me, smoke rising from his gun.

> "Target neutralized"<br> I double clicked my vox in acknowledgement and turned my attention back towards squad one.

> "Chief glad you could make it. Crash sites on the other side of this hotel. Covenant are crawling all over it. Follow me."<p>

I led the now combined forces of squad one and two over the covenants dead bodies, through the hotel to the sea front, encountering little resistance along the way. We reached the shore just as a phantom was dropping off more covenant reinforcements. We just had enough time to find cover before the drop ship started raining plasma down on us.

> "Anyone got a SPNKR? We need to take out those dam guns" I yelled slapping in a fresh magazine for my BR.<br> "Aim for the elites first" I heard a marine call as debris pounded off the walls. The helljumpers and marines kept firing at the covenant position until the plasma stopped.

> "Philowe is it clear?" I yelled as a grenade triggered an explosive barrel not feet away.<br> "You tell me" The Scotsman always had humoured us. "Se7en, Anti, move it out, covering fire"

> We lay down a field of fire while Anti and Se7en ran for the other side of the road. The phantom still hung just 10 meters off the ground pounding our formation with plasma.<br> "What about that phantom"

> "I've got a little present for them. Delta 239 this is Sergeant Headshot. Bring green smoke over." I had been allocated one bombing run just encase things got a little too hot for us to handle. I never planned on using it.<br> "Roger that Sir" the reply came through the vox. "ETA 30 seconds"

> "Keep your heads down men. Anti, Se7en, get the hell out of there" I ducked in behind a supporting pillar holding my rifle tight.<p>

Delta 239 cruising at a speed of 75km/h rounded the last of the city buildings as it manoeuvred onto the shoreline. Armed with a light weight chin mounted 40mm chain gun and 2 HE Anvil II missile pods it was perfect for supporting the grounded marines. 500 yards ahead hovered the covenant phantom, its guns glazing the area. Had it noticed the D77-TC pelican behind, it might have chosen its target more wisely. The pelican reversed thrusters to slow its velocity and loaded the rocket pods.

> "Target lock andâ€œ Fire" Four missiles spiralled through the air erupting into the phantom side on. The transport lurched sideways crashing into the building destroying its portable guns as fire bellowed from its aft engines. At that moment the right thrusters gave in as it plummeted to the ground taking out a street lamp in its fury.<br> "Hoo-rah!" The pilots chanted. "Sergeant, we'll set down over in the clearing"

The marines cheered as the drop ship hit the ground. I walked over to the rest of the helljumpers and they saluted me.

> "This victory isn't the warâ€œ but it sure as hell tastes sweet" I told them.<br> "About this warâ€œ special delivery from Commander Keyes, sir." I turned around as a warthog pulled up behind.

> "I'd love to help you crash the party but im needed elsewhere. Chief, take care of my boys" Moving towards the pelican, me and Voodoo boarded.<br> "I'll meet you in the metropolis" The transport ascended off the ground and headed for the heart of New Mombassa.

## 7. Chapter 7

\*\*Chapter 6\*\*

\*\*0849 Hours, October 20, 2552\*\*

\*\*Pelican two crash site, New Mombassa\*\*

Delta 239 engines burst to life, exfoliating dust, sand and smoke particles through the air as the drop ship propelled upwards towards the metropolis, the humming of its thrusters slowly fading into the distance. Se7en lifted his arm to shield himself from the wave. No sooner had the fighting finished, had it begun again. The ground where he stood was scorched with plasma from the Covenant Phantom which lay peacefully on its side. No one had survived when its armour had contained the ruptured blast from inside, cooking the survivors instantly. It was time to move from this war torn area and head for the city innards. The Master Chief was climbing into the Warthogs driving seat as he walked over.

> "Permission to ride shotgun, Sir"  
"Permission granted"  
> Private Se7en strutted over to the side seat as someone grabbed his arm from behind. It was Anti, his outstretched hand holding some Battle rifle ammo clips.  
"Take these" motioning at the rifle ammo. "You'll never know when you'd need them. Take care of yourself and no heroics"  
> Se7en shook Anti's hand. He had known him all through basic training and they had become best of friends.  
"Don't worry I'll meet you on the other side. I always do." Se7en gave a smile as he jumped into the passenger's seat. With that the vehicle started to roll.

The walls were chipped, the paintwork shoddy, the road unfinished but it was home and it would be defended. Morangie looked around at the pocket of marine resistance that had set up shop. Those that were injured had been tended to as best possible with limited medical supplies and had been put aside as the clearing begun. They had been involved in skirmishes with the landing force most of the morning and had then been run underground by hostiles from the air. Climbing through the rubble the resistance had entered the remains of a collapsed highway leading to Zone 4. From there they had struggled with the wounded as the marines headed, along the tunnel, for the metropolis. After an exhausting 70 minutes of walking, when the injured could take no more, the marines halted their march. Setting a perimeter and relaying scouts to watch the exits, they had finally rested. Minutes passed as Morangie started to deploy the last of the M247 GP Machine Gun when the first shots were fired.

The death stick slowly burned at one end with each puff, receding where the cinders fizzled disintegrating onto the floor. Andz had recruited into the military for one soul purpose "Revenge! He had seen his home world melt from a window while fleeing in a transport carrier just before Slipspace. This had been at a very young age. Now several years on he had vowed to fight the Covenant wherever, whenever. He engulfed the stick once more and let loose one last puff before tossing it away. No sooner had he done so that the buzzing had start. It was low at first, nothing more than irritancy, but grew larger and then started multiplying. Andz looked down the tunnel as if this would solve his dilemma.

> "What the!" Squinting into the darkness he saw wings, lots of wings.  
"Oh hell no"  
> Turning the marine ran, as fast as he could towards the encampment. Drawing his side arm pistol Andz shot over his shoulder at the incoming horde as a barrage of plasma devoured the pavement behind him. Yelling into the radio he got no reply.  
"Dam the static must be interfering with the transmission"  
> Not looking where he was running he tripped releasing his grasp on the radio as it slipped onto the floor.  
There was no turning back now, for they were almost upon him. He had to stay alive; he had to warn the others.

The radio fizzed with static as the marines gathered together trying to make head or tail of the blabber that was being received.  
> "Incoming force! I repeat. I am a force"  
There was a large crackle and the com channel went quiet apart from a flutter in the background.  
> "Soldier respond. Respond dammit"  
The flutter became a constant buzzing that grew to an immense sound as it passed by. Morangie pushed the radio away from his ear while the noise proceeded intensely.

> "What's wrong?" A young lad to his right asked.<br> "Drones"  
Morangie replied coldly.  
> "Sir?" The puzzled reply came.<br> "Drones son, Drones!" Morangie  
turned to the others.  
> "Set out defensive positions along the front. Move the injured  
behind cover"<br> "Quickly dammit, quickly"  
> "Boll, get on that machine gun"<br> "Sir it's not deployed yet"  
> "Bloody hell, I'll cover you just get the dam thing  
operational"<br> With that the walls vibrated with the sound of the  
humming and all hell broke loose for the enemy were upon him.

End  
file.